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SUBJECT: POLAND SUPPORTS US AFGHANISTAN STRATEGY

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[1](#)B. STATE 122731

Classified By: Ambassador Lee A. Feinstein for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Initial Polish reactions to the newly announced Afghanistan strategy have been supportive nearly across the board. In a morning interview, Prime Minister Tusk said Poland should respond to the U.S. call as a manifestation of "Allied solidarity". Previewing the December 1 call between the Prime Minister and President Obama, Foreign Minister Sikorski told the Ambassador earlier that day that the political decision to deploy troops had been taken. He said a troop increase would be announced by the December 7 force generation conference or sooner. Public and private statements of the size of the increase have ranged from 800-1,000 troops. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) In advance of the President's call to PM Tusk, Foreign Minister Sikorski told the Ambassador that the political decision to deploy additional troops had been taken, and that the PM had authorized him to express political support for U.S. plans. Sikorski said the number of troops involved would be announced at the December 7 force generation conference at SHAPE. When pressed by the Ambassador, he said it "is entirely possible" that the number could be announced earlier, either at or before the NATO Ministerial. Sikorski said the President's call to Prime Minister Tusk would be extremely helpful. He praised the President's decision to support an updating of NATO contingency plans, adding that actions that reinforce NATO's core Article V functions enable the government to support NATO's expeditionary capabilities.

[1](#)3. (U) In a television interview last night, Tusk reported on his phone conversation with POTUS. He acknowledged that President Obama had requested more Polish troops, which would enhance the ability of the international community to begin a military withdrawal within the next 18-24 months. Tusk said the exact size of Poland's prospective troop increase had not yet been decided, but he emphasized that the mission in Afghanistan was an investment in Poland's own security -- the ISAF mission was a direct response to the invocation of Article V, which Poland regards as "the only true weapon ... in case of a threat" against Poland.

[1](#)4. (SBU) In other reactions, Andrzej Halicki, Chairman of the Sejm Foreign Affairs Committee, said the situation required an enhanced military presence, which was in Poland's national interest. He thought the U.S. strategy was correct and that Poland should fulfill its commitments. At least one member of the opposition Law and Justice Party and now MEP, Pawel Kowal, agreed that Poland should respond to the call for increased engagement. He added that NATO could not abandon Afghan forces before they were ready to take on responsibility for their country's security. Kowal,

reflecting views from other sources, said that the prospective troop increase should be accompanied by a long-term civilian engagement program for Afghanistan, a view consistent with that outlined by the president yesterday.

¶5. (U) President Obama's speech was in all major media outlets. Print media went to press before the speech's delivery, but they used advance information for their stories. Overall, reporting was factual with limited commentary. The primary focus was on the phone call between POTUS and Tusk, with the prime minister being the principal interlocutor quoted by media sources. Views of other politicians generally agreed with Tusk's view that Poland's willingness to send more troops was based on its commitment to the Alliance.

¶6. (U) The Embassy appreciates the prompt provision of a Polish-language translation of the president's speech, which was posted, along with supporting materials, on the Embassy website before OOB on December 2.

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